

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF  
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 181.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1867.

PRICE 1½d.

## THE PLANTAGENET AND THE TRAVELLERS' JOY.

THE *Plantagenet*, above referred to, is a hotel of some pretension on the eastern seaboard of this favoured land. The *Travellers' Joy* is not a flower (nor anything like it), but a village inn, in the same locality, only more inland. It is my settled purpose, for the benefit of such of my fellow-countrymen as may be foolishly thinking of going out of town this summer, for the sake of sea or country air, to describe both these places.

Spring had put in that first deceptive appearance of hers, which she so frequently uses at the close of the winter weather; just as some base undergraduate at a voluntary theological lecture will leave his card in the professor's hand, and then slink out behind his back, she had shewn her face, and we fondly thought she was about to stay; we did not suspect that old scoundrel Winter to be still lingering in the lap of May; and finding London hot, five town-bred gentlemen, including the present writer, resolved to go away.

One of these, Faintheart, a foreigner, opined that we should go to Paris, for that no other place on the earth's surface was in reality worth visiting.

Another whom I will call Mæcenas, because (Heaven bless him!) he is a patron of literature, proposed that we should repair to Menue, a certain manufacturing town (we understood) in the south of France, where, exactly eighteen years and two months ago, he had had the very best dinner he had ever eaten in his life.

Brighteyes, a barrister, protested with cheerful alacrity that he would come into any gentleman's plan which did not necessitate crossing the Channel; but that since the nature of his constitution demanded a fortnight's complete repose after a sea-passage, and our whole holiday was not to exceed that period, the Court (if we would allow him to call us so) must perceive that a home-journey was indispensable.

As I don't think I can speak French (or at least

have never attempted to do so), I was equally opposed (though I did not think it necessary to give the reason) to foreign travel.

Then Slyboots, the savant—whom nobody has ever yet fathomed, no not even so far as to know where he lives—came in, as usual, with his casting-vote, and settled everything in his own way.

'Let us go to Shinglebeach,' said he.

'I don't like the name,' said Faintheart suspiciously.

'I don't like the place,' thought I to myself, for I remembered to have heard of suicide at Shinglebeach being rather a popular amusement in the summer months; but I held my tongue.

'Why Shinglebeach?' inquired Brighteyes in his swift cross-examining manner.

'It is a most attractive spot,' answered Slyboots gravely. 'The marks of ancient sea-margins are to be clearly traced miles inland. The most interesting ruin in Great Britain, the one most associated (if I except the Tower) with the history of our native land, is within walking-distance. Upon the Downs in the neighbourhood, beetles of the rarest kind'—

'But the hotel?' interposed Mæcenas rudely. 'What food is to be got beside your beetles? That is the point; I may say the only point about which it is necessary to be certain. Now, at Menue'—

'Stop, stop!' interrupted Brighteyes hastily; 'don't let us embarrass ourselves with Menue. You shall go there, my dear Mæcenas, by yourself, when this little expedition is over.—But now, Slyboots, upon your solemn oath' [the savant turned deadly pale], 'I mean upon your honour' [the savant's colour returned; deception was familiar to him, perjury was out of his line], 'can you honestly recommend the hotel at this place, for you know we like our little comforts?'

'My good friends,' cried Slyboots, with an engaging frankness that has concealed his ways throughout life far better than any vulgar evasion could possibly have done, 'am I the man to deceive you? I have, it is true, never myself been to Shinglebeach, but I have always heard it spoken of as one of the most interesting of

localities; the *Plantagenet*— But you must surely have heard of the *Plantagenet Hotel*?

I nodded, not because I had ever heard of it, but because Slyboots looked at me in his pleasant and persuasive manner.

'He knows it,' observed the savant triumphantly. 'Everybody does know it who knows anything about cookery.' [Mæcenas, who prides himself even more upon the accuracy of his palate than that of his literary taste, winced at this.] 'If you are fond of kickshaws, the *Plantagenet* is the very place for you. As for Faintheart, he will imagine himself once again in his native land.'

Faintheart shuddered; the subject was painful to him; his beloved country had been recently absorbed by the Prussian Eagle.

'As for you, Brighteyes, who are fond of walking'—

'One can walk *everywhere*,' observed that gentleman incisively.

'And as for you, my dear fellow,' continued the savant, turning his attentions from the unpromising Brighteyes to myself, 'why, you know the *Plantagenet* already, as you know everything else, and I need not tell you how excellent is the accommodation it affords.'

It was weak of me to be silent, I am aware: if I had guessed the seriousness of the charge that I was subsequently to incur, I should have spoken, of course. But Slyboots is really so pleasant—and a compliment from one of his intelligence is so well worth having—in short, I am afraid I not only nodded, but nodded an affirmative.

Shinglebeach is a hideous clump of houses upon a shore of rubble-stones. A long terrace of forbidding mansions, called the Esplanade—the outskirts of which seem to be undergoing an operation analogous to moulting in birds, or the mange in dogs—is considered to be its most desirable locality, and each house is said to let during the summer months at from twenty to twenty-five guineas a week. There is not a tree to be seen, even by the aid of a Dollond's telescope, in any direction whatever, and in August I should fancy it would be hot. George III. once honoured Shinglebeach with his presence (probably during an aggravated attack of lunacy), and the site of the residence he occupied on that occasion is still called Royal Terrace, and is charged for to tenants accordingly. George IV. also visited the place, in search of what peculiar pleasure it is impossible to guess; I incline to the belief indeed that Beau Brummell brought him down there as a practical joke, for we read that the friendship of those two worthies was abruptly terminated about that identical time. He stopped at the *Plantagenet* throughout his sojourn, which extended to fourteen hours, but contrary to his custom, left no memento of his visit in the shape of a new dish—at least we found nothing there in the culinary way of so late an epoch. No one would have guessed that a king had ever crossed the threshold, except for the majestic coolness of the landlord—and his prices.

Never shall I forget our first dinner in that delusive establishment, which, at the request of the party, I had ordered to be served in the *Plantagenet's* best manner, and for which I was, most unjustly, held responsible. Still less shall I forget the wines.

'Is this *soup*?' asked Mæcenas during the first course, and with the air of a man really asking for

information. 'Because, if so, soup is new to me: I have never tasted soup.'

'Well, I confess,' said Slyboots, looking at me good-humouredly, 'your soup is not quite up to the mark; but I dare say you will redeem yourself in the fish.'

'My soup! and redeem myself in the fish!' cried I scornfully. 'Well, that's a good one.'

'Well, let us hope it will be a good one,' observed Brighteyes, with his habitual cheerfulness. 'Let us trust it will be red mullet.'

'No. I know what it will be,' said Faintheart gloomily. 'It will be soles. They will have come down with us in the train from London. I know these British inns so well. Afterwards will appear something squashed and half cold, which, because it is handed round, they will call an *entrée*. Then there will be a leg of mutton: tough, oh, so tough! Then rhubarb-tart—always rhubarb-tart; and a cheese which I don't mean to touch. Now, if we had gone to Paris'—

'Or, still better, to Menue,' put in Mæcenas.

'Some of us would have been green and white by this time, and could have eaten nothing,' added Brighteyes hastily; 'as it is, I have a magnificent appetite. Why the deuce don't that waiter come?'

'It is impossible to say,' observed Slyboots. 'I don't think he is responsible for his actions. I have tried to catch his eye once or twice, and he evades me in a very peculiar manner. Have you remarked, too, that he never speaks?'

We all agreed that there was something far from right about that waiter.

'Goodness gracious!' ejaculated Mæcenas, passing a costly pocket-handkerchief across his ample brow; 'I wish he wouldn't stand behind my chair.'

'There is nothing to fear,' returned the savant calmly. 'I have studied the subject of homicidal impulse. A nervous manner; a disinclination to catch the human eye; an aversion to speech; profuse perspiration when addressed: these are all signs of suicidal mania. He will probably pitch himself out of window, when we are least expecting it.'

'Exit with the *entrée*,' observed Brighteyes epigrammatically. 'Hush! he comes.'

There was really something very remarkable about that waiter. He had a good-looking, though feeble face, but with an air of mixed abstraction and embarrassment that was most extraordinary; and he had never spoken a single word.

'What fish is it?' inquired Mæcenas peevishly (he is a little impatient with respect to his food), before the cover had been removed.

'Fish me no fishes,' was the astounding reply of the waiter.

'This is most curious, most interesting,' murmured Slyboots (who was on the further side of the table). 'If we can only draw him out.—Waiter, are there any pleasant drives in this neighbourhood?'

The waiter shewed his teeth, good-humouredly, but emphatically shook his head.

'No drives, eh? Well, I suppose there are some walks, at all events?'

But again the waiter shewed his teeth, and shook his head more emphatically even than before.

'No walks, eh?' continued the imperturbable Slyboots. 'And I daresay there are no pleasure-boats to be hired for sailing on the sea?'

'Certainly not,' answered our mysterious attendant as plainly as head and teeth could speak.

'Then please to bring the fish-sauce,' said Slyboots. Whereupon, repeating what sounded like 'Fish-horse,' in a mechanical manner, the unfortunate creature left the room.

We were looking at one another in solemn silence, not unmixed with alarm, when Faintheart, with an effort, thus expressed himself: 'There's nothing the matter with the poor fellow at all; he's a stupid British waiter, just as they all are. He had absolutely forgotten what he calls the fish-horse.'

'Stop a bit,' cried Brighteyes; 'I am not so sure.—Lift up that cover, Mæcenas. I believe there is no fish beneath it. There; it's mutton! The fact is, we are being waited upon by a gentleman from the continent. All foreigners have not your intelligence, my dear Faintheart—that's all.'

Brighteyes was right. This unfortunate waiter had been imported, like a coolie, to labour during the coming season at the *Plantagenet*. He had only arrived there the day before, and of course knew no more about Shinglebeach than we did. Being totally unacquainted with the British language, he naturally objected to be drawn into conversation, and shook his head with determination when addressed.

Faintheart, who is a polyglottist of the first-water, tried him with every modern tongue without effect: at last he gathered, from some chance expression, that this poor fellow's country had, like his own, been recently absorbed by the Prussian Eagle; and from that time they were allies. Faintheart thenceforward always spoke to him more in sorrow than in anger, whereas we used the contrary style. Since it comforted us, and could not hurt his feelings, we applied to him every depreciatory epithet of which propriety admitted.

Next to that waiter at the *Plantagenet*, the most unsatisfactory things were what he brought. The courses were composed of precisely what Faintheart had predicted, except that we once had fish à l'Indienne—soles upon which the cook had emptied the remains of a pickle-jar.

It was a grand sight to behold Mæcenas inquiring with forced calmness for some (to him) necessity of the table.

'Waiter, I do not see the asparagus!'

'A-sparrow-gus,' reiterated the unhappy alien, checking off the syllables upon his fingers (His proprietor absolved him, doubtless from respect to his outraged nationality, from wearing Berlin gloves).—'a-sparrow-gus'; and down he fled to the kitchen with that cuckoo note.

The people below, ignorant that the vegetable is to be procured before May, imagined that we were making an April-fool of him.

But the wines! Good-luck, the wines! If high prices could insure excellence in that way, the *Plantagenet carte* certainly promised the best vintages. The cheapest Sherry was 6s. 6d. per bottle. That being absolutely nauseous, we ordered the dearest (well was it called Golden!), at 8s. 6d.

'Now, this,' said Mæcenas, smacking his fastidious lips, and addressing the unconscious waiter as though he were an immense congregation of attentive listeners—'this, although not good, is drinkable.'

My own firm and settled conviction is, that the one wine was identically the same as the other, except that, in the second case, they had added

a little water: but even this scanty meed of praise I welcomed gladly. Little by little, Slyboots had shifted the whole responsibility of our coming to Shinglebeach upon my shoulders, and whatever went right, I was determined should go to my credit. The Champagne was really not bad, and charged for at little more than double the price we should have paid for it in London.

The air was beautiful. Whenever we complained of anything amiss at Shinglebeach, the inhabitants were always prompt to reply: 'That may be; but then, what a beautiful Air we have!'

This I do not deny; indeed, it ought to be good, for that air—taking the usual time allowed by the best medical authorities for expansion and contraction of the lungs—I calculated to cost us exactly fourpence-halfpenny a breath. No poet could treat himself to an inspiration down at Shinglebeach, and therefore the place will remain for ever unsung; otherwise, if a bard should ever make immortal that locality, and eulogise (by poetical licence) the *Plantagenet*, he will scarcely fail to make mention of the reforms inaugurated in that establishment by five strangers—angels unawares—who once were lodged there. I say 'lodged' there advisedly, because, as will be seen, we were not altogether boarded. After that first dinner, we were of opinion that our breakfast could not be left to the discretion of the cook, so we summoned the landlord in person. It was no wonder that there was no flavour of George IV. about him—no courtliness—no magnificent politeness. Nine landlords, since that Augustan epoch, had made their fortunes out of that inn. Of his wines, which were of the best brands, he said [had he the faintest notion of what he was talking about?], no complaint had ever been made before. Asparagus was unattainable so early in the year. Gentlemen could scarcely expect fish for breakfast down at the sea.

'Well, let us have kidneys, and have done with it,' ejaculated Mæcenas wearily.

'Kidneys, sir,' returned the landlord in a deprecatory tone. 'Well, you see, sir, with respect to kidneys, *Shinglebeach is such a little place*.'

We roared.

'Curiously ignorant of anatomy,' murmured Slyboots, to whom ignorance (manifested in others) is always bliss.

'Look here,' cried Brighteyes; 'may we order things in if we can find them in the town?'

'Most certainly,' replied the landlord, not one whit abashed.

And we did so. We bought kidneys (although it was such a little place), and asparagus and sea-kale, paying, however, a very considerable corkage on those delicacies. We introduced, too, apparently for the first time, into this establishment the condiment called salad, the materials for making which were obtained from the alien waiter by what is called 'the exhaustive process'—by rejecting a thousand things he brought, which were of no use, such as lemons, jam, a nutmeg-grater with nothing in it, and (especially) a local guide-book.

It was a perusal of this last which induced us to exchange our quarters for the *Travellers' Joy*, 'a small but comfortable country inn immediately opposite the most interesting ruin in all England.'

Slyboots had secured upon the Downs a splendid specimen of that rare beetle, in search of which, and with no other object whatsoever, he had in reality brought us all to Shinglebeach, and was as anxious

to depart as the rest of us. There was a stone gargoyle—the subject of much archaeological controversy—somewhere about the historical ruin alluded to, which also attracted him in that direction.

‘A country inn,’ said he, in his mellifluous tones, ‘is a most charming affair: its snow-white coverlets, with a scent of lavender about them; its fresh eggs and cream; its excellent home-brewed ale. Then the house itself so picturesque and unpretending; roses and honeysuckles contending for the mastery upon its cheerful face; a hundred creepers’—

‘Yes, beside those which are inside,’ quoth Faintheart. ‘I perceive it will be a failure already. We should certainly have gone to Paris.’

‘Or, better still, to Menue,’ observed Mæcenas.

‘Waited upon,’ continued Slyboots, without minding these interruptions in the least, ‘by a simple but beautiful country maiden, fresh as the morn.’

‘And who can speak English,’ added Brighteyes with vivacity; ‘who labours under no depressing political circumstances. We will go to the *Travellers’ Joy* to-morrow.’

On the morrow, therefore, after having despatched our luggage by train—for the village with the ruin was on a line of railway—we started on foot for our romantic country-quarters. Our bill at the *Plantagenet* was something enormous. We might have lived at the *Clarendon*, in town, for less money—and not been compelled to buy our own vegetables—so that, although we were glad enough to have got quit of the place, we felt like prisoners newly enfranchised indeed, but who had paid a most exorbitant sum for ransom. Only Brighteyes was merry. When asked the reason of his offensive cheerfulness, he only replied: ‘Ha, ha!’ like a demon. We had left the inn, and climbed a little hill surmounting it, before he deigned to communicate the cause of his hilarity. ‘In the first place,’ said he, ‘there is this guide-book, which I have taken from the *Plantagenet* without paying for it: surely in itself some source of congratulation. And secondly, within the guide-book I have found these words of unspeakable comfort.

“It is a melancholy reflection,” quoted he, with gloating rapture, “that the devouring sea is slowly but surely making inroads upon Shinglebeach. In a decade of years” [that is guide-book for ten years, my Faintheart], “it is doubtful whether the Esplanade itself, including that famous establishment, the *Plantagenet*, will not be encroached upon—nay, utterly overwhelmed!”

With a common impulse of fervent gratitude, such as is seldom seen except upon the stage, the whole party reverently raised their hats, and exclaimed: ‘Thank goodness!’

‘Fish-me-no-fishes will have fish enough then and to spare,’ exclaimed Mæcenas indignantly.

‘Nay,’ said Faintheart, ‘the poor waiter, although he serves an extortionate master, is, as Mr Gladstone has truly reminded us, our own flesh and blood.’

‘Ah! he is not, however, my fellow-countryman,’ observed Brighteyes drily.

‘Hush, hush, my friends,’ exclaimed Slyboots in his most impressive manner. ‘Let us be charitable to all. The *Plantagenet* is doubtless exorbitant in its charges upon this very account. It knows that it has but a few years to live. We are now travelling inland, where no such excuse can be

pleaded; where country pleasures, country produce, and objects of archaeological interest’—

Here the savant found himself alone, the rest of the party having set off with some precipitancy when it was perceived that he was about to make a speech. Winking, therefore, at the surrounding objects, to express the mutual understanding known to exist between himself and all the works of nature, Slyboots trotted on after his friends.

It is the peculiarity of all country places that they are a good deal further off than common report asserts, or even than they appear to be in the landscape. The day was warm, the dust was thick, and we were thoroughly wayworn before the majestic ruin, opposite which we were to find the *Travellers’ Joy*, began to appear. Mæcenas (who is rather stout) felt perhaps most of all of us the effects of this protracted exertion, and a circumstance presently occurred which combined to prostrate his energies still further. Meeting an ancient rustic carrying a flail—quite a picturesque object, if one had not been so tired—he must needs inquire of him, in his grand manner, as to whether the ruin before us was the ruin for which we were bound [as though there were likely to be two ruins, each about the size of Chester, within a stone’s-throw of one another.]

‘My good man,’ exclaimed Mæcenas, with the air of a lord of the soil remitting the punishment of death to his vassal, ‘is yonder ruin Fountains Abbey?’ [Let us call it so, though, of course, it was not that.]

It is impossible to describe in words the triumphant cunning which overspread that peasant’s face as he replied: ‘Well, I dare say you knows just as well as I does;’ and with that he went chuckling down the road.

‘I really believe,’ quoth Mæcenas loftily, ‘that that poor creature imagines that he has the advantage of me.’

‘Well, upon my life,’ said Brighteyes (and he expressed the feelings of us all), ‘I do think he has.’

What with this unfortunate rencontre and his fatigue, Mæcenas could only be kept in motion by dilating upon the luncheon we would order upon our arrival, just as a bundle of hay dangled before a beast of burden is said to encourage it to renewed endeavours.

‘We will have a cold lunch,’ said Mæcenas, ‘because it can be most promptly prepared.’

‘Cold lamb and mint-sauce,’ affirmed Brighteyes unctuously.

‘And Faintheart shall make the salad,’ added Slyboots, ‘in the approved manner used by his beloved country before it was absorbed by the Prussian Eagle; then afterwards, smoking the choice Havana, we will meditate in these noble ruins upon the glorious past’—

‘If you can only get there,’ observed Faintheart gloomily. ‘This high wall runs all round.’

‘That is merely to preserve them,’ explained the savant. ‘This historic pile is the heritage of every Briton—What is the matter?’

Mæcenas had dropped down upon a milestone as suddenly as if he had been shot, and was pointing feebly to an edifice that had just loomed in sight, if a one-storied house, presenting but four windows and a door, can be said to loom. Upon its narrow forehead was painted the mocking words, *The Travellers’ Joy*.

‘It may be very nice *inside*, though,’ observed the



savant, whose mind, intent on the stone gargoyle, was the first to recover from this moral shock.

Nobody answered him. Only a muffled cry of 'Lunch, lunch!' escaped from the lips of Mæcenas.

We pressed on. The inn, so far from being the picturesque edifice the imagination of Slyboots had depicted, was like one of those fifth-rate places of entertainment in large towns which are called coffee-houses. The gates of the old ruin did indeed stand opposite, or we might have clung to the hope that there was still some shocking mistake. In that supreme moment I acknowledged to myself that there were worse places to lodge at than the *Plan-tagenet*. As for our sleeping in the house before us, the thing was impossible. The *Travellers' Joy* had barely accommodation for one traveller.

'What have you got in the house that is cold?' inquired Mæcenas of the red-handed, black-faced female who answered the summons. He spoke with great elaboration and the quiet calmness of despair. 'Cold lamb—mint-sauce—salad. *Anything* cold; only be quick about it.'

'We have nothing *exactly* cold, sir, in the house,' replied the damsel.

'What *can* she mean?' inquired Mæcenas feebly. 'I am not equal to argue with this person. Nothing *exactly* cold!'

'It is my belief,' observed Faintheart gloomily, 'that she means there is a human body in the house—some person recently deceased.'

'Goodness gracious!' exclaimed Brighteyes, hastily recrossing the threshold; 'which is the way to the railway station?'

'My good girl,' resumed Mæcenas meekly, 'we are very hungry, and shall be thankful for whatever you can give us. If you have nothing cold, have you anything hot?'

'No, sir; we have nothing *exactly* hot.'

'Then what have you got?' inquired the judicious Slyboots.

'We have bread and cheese, sir,' replied the maiden. 'Please step into the parlour.'

This was a cheerless apartment, which, by the smell of it, I should think had been hermetically sealed throughout the winter. It had five horse-hair chairs in it, the contents of which had been much ruffled—perhaps for *chignons*. A very extensive tea-tray upon the sideboard exhibited a picture of the local ruin executed in mother-of-pearl. Above the fireplace there was a portrait of a stout lady advanced in years; 'The recently deceased,' observed Faintheart in explanation.

'Where is the beer?' asked Brighteyes, when a loaf of stale bread, and a piece of cheese dreadfully like yellow soap, had been placed upon the table.

The maiden nodded, and presently appeared, like one in an Allegory, bearing five stone bottles. 'The inn is a temperance house, and we have only *ginger-beer*,' explained she. 'Master begs you will be very careful with it.'

'Is it so strong, then?' inquired Faintheart cynically.

'O no, sir; far from that; only he hopes you won't let it fly about, and spile the furniture.'

There was nothing for it but submission. A ghastly smile played upon our wayworn faces as we sat down to this repast. We had not the spirits to speak.

Slyboots only, still clinging to the gargoyle, requested the attendant to get the keys, in order that we might presently explore the historical ruins.

'O sir,' said she, 'it's very unlucky, but the family don't allow the ruins to be shewn at all this week, it being Easter-week. Now, any other time in the year that you should please to come down'—

Mæcenas rose, and leaving the room without a word, moved slowly down the street towards the railway station; and one by one, each followed his example. We sat in the bare waiting-room of the little station for about four hours, until a train came—the only one in the day that stopped at that hateful place—and took us to London.

The catastrophe was too complete to admit of reproaches. Once only, on that prolonged journey (for it was a parliamentary train), there was a murmur from Faintheart.

'If they had but taken my advice, and gone to Paris.'

'Ay, or mine,' echoed Mæcenas feebly; 'if we had but gone to Menue.'

### TORTURE IN ENGLAND.

RUSHWORTH, describing the appearance of John Felton, the assassin of the Duke of Buckingham, before the Privy-council, says: 'Doctor Laud, Bishop of London, being then at the Council-table, told him if he would not confess, he must go to the rack. Felton replied: "If it must be so, he could not tell whom he might nominate in the extremity of torture; and if what he should say then must go for truth, he could not tell whether his Lordship (meaning the Bishop of London) or which of their Lordships he might name, for torture might draw unexpected things from him." After this, he was asked no more questions, but sent back to prison. The Council then fell into debate whether by the law of the land they could justify the putting him to the rack. The king being at the Council, said: "Before any such thing be done, let the advice of the judges be had thereon whether it be legal or no."'

On the 14th November 1628, the judges, assembled at Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, agreed in their answer about Felton, that 'he ought not by the law to be tortured by the rack, for no such punishment is known or allowed by our law.'

Such was the answer which the judges unanimously gave upon the vital question as to the legality of torture in England—an answer which contained an honourable truth, such as no other set of judges in Europe could have spoken in reference to any but the English law. It was and is true that 'no such punishment is known or allowed by our law'—that is to say, torture was not, with one exception, permitted at all; and in that one exception, which will be specified, it was permitted neither as a punishment nor as a means of getting evidence, but as a persuasive to induce a man charged with felony to put himself upon his trial. It was not only against the spirit of English legislation, but against the letter of *Magna Charta* and other statutes, and never formed part of the process of English courts. There are numerous instances recorded of its having been inflicted, in shapes almost as revolting to humanity as those which still scare the sight of visitors to the mediæval dungeons of Ratibon and Nuremberg; but these instances must be sought for not in the records of the law-courts, nor in the annals of any authorised tribunal, but in the history of private wars and feudal violence; or later still, in the

account of the proceedings of the Privy-council and Star-chamber, in which last two it was avowedly 'an instrument of state,' and not of law. Here is an account of torture inflicted by private hands at a time (1137 A.D.) when not only was the arm of the law as powerless as its voice, but when the land so groaned under the oppressive rule of the Norman barons, that men said openly: 'Christ and his saints slept.' The account is taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and runs as follows: 'Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women; and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some up by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by their thumbs, or by the head, and they hung burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string about their heads, and twisted it till it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders, and snakes, and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet-house—that is, into a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep, and they put sharp stones in it, and crushed the man therein, so that they broke all his limbs. There were hateful and grim things called *sachenteges* in many of the castles, and which two or three men had enough to do to carry. The *sachenteg* was made thus: it was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might noways sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but that he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. I cannot and I may not tell of all the wounds and all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land.'

To this account, which is only one of many that might be quoted, must be added that of the cruelties practised by Richard I. upon the Jews, in order to make them give up their treasure; but this, as well as all the other instances, is but a specimen of the illegal violence which was rife and unpunished in the days when might was right, and when, more than now, 'no one doubted the nobility of conquerors.' At no time did the law of England countenance torture, excepting always the *peine forte et dure*, which has been already alluded to, and will be noticed presently. Torture was a creature of the civil law, which, as we know, insisted on the bringing in of this instrument to all those countries where that law established itself. Hence it is that in nearly every state in Europe torture was at one time or other not only practised, but legally practised; and the ingenuity of man, which 'hath found out many inventions,' excelled so in this particular, that if angels wept, fiends must have rejoiced at the fantastic tricks which 'proud man, dressed in a little brief authority,' played before high heaven. From England, the civil law, with its grim array of infernal machines, in spite of the great exertions of ecclesiastics in its behalf, was ever rigidly shut out; and when an attempt was made in the twentieth year of Henry III. to introduce a salutary principle out of the Roman law into the English system, the barons at the parliament of Merton would not countenance the innovation, but said with one voice: '*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare!*'

Sir John Fortescue, who was Chief-justice of the King's Bench under Henry VI., in his book

*De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, eloquently declaims against the use of torture, which the Duke of Exeter had introduced into England as a state-weapon, at a time when the attention of men was too absorbingly engaged by the Wars of the Roses to allow of the strange thing being noticed. Sir Thomas Smith, the learned lawyer, whose humanity drove him to solicit Burleigh to address the warrants for torture to anybody but the petitioner, also inveighs against the illegal practice which grew to its fullest height in Elizabeth's reign; and if any further corroboration were wanted to these men's dicta, and to the dictum of the judges in Felton's case, it might be found in the third Institute of Coke, where it is said, in reference to the torture used by order of the Privy-council: 'So as there is no law to warrant tortures in this land, nor can they be justified by any prescription, being so lately brought in. . . . And there is no one opinion in our books, or judicial record (that we have seen and remember), for the maintenance of tortures or torments.'

One exception to the rule of law against the use of torture having been alluded to, it will be as well to notice it more particularly before going on to consider what tortures were used in England as state-weapons.

*Peine forte et dure* was inflicted upon any one who, being arraigned on a charge of felony, stood wilfully mute, and would not plead 'guilty' or 'not guilty.' The highly technical rule of law which would not suffer a plea of 'not guilty' to be entered for the prisoner, and trial to proceed thereon, compelled the administrators of the law to cast about how they might force a man to put himself upon his trial. But this piece of legal pedantry did not obtain till about the fifth year of Henry III. Before that time, if a prisoner 'stood mute' when arraigned for felony, it was first determined by a jury whether he were mute by the visitation of God, or whether he were obstinately silent; if the latter was found, a jury of twelve tried the issue of felony, and if they pronounced him guilty, a jury of twenty-four examined their verdict, and if they approved it, the prisoner was hanged. In cases of high treason, the difficulty was got over by taking silence to be a confession of guilt, and the accused was executed in such cases without trial. It has been erroneously said that *peine forte et dure* was introduced by the statute of Westminster the First (3 Ed. I. c. 12), which directs that 'notorious felons, and which openly be of evil name, and will not put themselves in enquests of felonies before the justices at the king's suit, "*soient mys en la prisonne forte et dure,*" as they which refuse to stand to the common law of the land.' Lord Coke, however, says that *peine forte et dure*, evidently a different thing from *la prisonne forte et dure*, was a penalty at common law, and was introduced between the 5 Henry III. and the 3 Edward I. Britton thus describes it as it was in that time: 'If they will not put themselves upon the country, let them be put to their penance until they pray to do it; and let their penance be this—that they be barefooted, ungirded, and bareheaded, in their coat only, in prison upon the bare ground, continually night and day; that they eat only bread, made of barley and bran; that they drink not the day they eat, nor eat the day they drink; nor drink anything but water the day they do not eat; and that they be fastened down with irons.'

It seems that this process, dreadful though it

must have been, was not quick enough in loosening the tongues of accused persons. Prisoners are said to have lasted forty days under the treatment, and such hardihood was incompatible with the time at the disposal of the judges, especially on circuit, when they did not stay more than two or three days in a town. Accordingly, about the time of Henry IV., *peine forte et dure* was thus applied: 'The man or woman shall be remanded to the prison, and laid there in some low and dark house, where they shall lie naked on the bare earth, without any litter, rushes, or other clothing, and without any garments about them . . . ; and that they shall lie upon their backs, their heads uncovered and their feet, and one arm shall be drawn to one quarter of the house with a cord, and the other arm to another quarter; and in the same manner shall be done with their legs; and there shall be laid upon their bodies iron and stone, so much as they may bear, and more; and the next day following, they shall have three morsels of barley-bread, without any drink; and the second day, they shall drink thrice of the water that is next to the house of the prison (except running water), without any bread; and this shall be their diet until they be dead.'

This horrible torture continued to be legal down to the time of George III. The writer has not been able to ascertain the date at which it was last inflicted; but until the twelfth year of that king it was the recognised legal mode by which prisoners charged with felony were compelled to put themselves upon their trial. The motive for refusing to plead was to escape forfeiture; and men were found sufficiently courageous to bear this fiendish process of crushing to death, rather than, by putting themselves on a trial of which they could foretell the issue, expose to beggary and want those who were dearer to them than their own lives. This was the only torture authorised by the law of the land, at least upon persons not condemned to death. The execution of the sentence of death, with its hideous phases of drawing, hanging, mutilating, beheading, and quartering, was, in all conscience, a practical refinement of torture; but, except in a few atrocious cases, the tender mercy of the cruel allowed the convicts to hang till they were dead, before the *et ceteras* of the sentence were entered upon.

Such being the position occupied by torture in respect of the law of the land, what was its place as an instrument of state, and what does history relate of it?

Lord Coke tells us that the rack in the Tower was brought in by the Duke of Exeter, under Henry VI., and is therefore familiarly called the Duke of Exeter's Daughter. From this time, it is very certain that the rack was a machine constantly used by the king, and by the Privy-council exercising his prerogative. It is thus described by Dr Lingard, in a note to his *History of England*: 'The rack was a large open frame of oak, raised three feet from the ground. The prisoner was laid under it, on his back, on the floor: his wrists and ankles were attached by cords to two rollers at the ends of the frame; these were moved by levers in opposite directions, till the body rose to a level with the frame. Questions were then put; and if the answers did not prove satisfactory, the sufferer was stretched more and more, till the bones started from their sockets.' A contrivance of the same sort, used by the Inquisition in Languedoc, had what the regiment of Satan would call an improve-

ment, in the shape of an apparatus which, besides wrenching the wrists and ankles, racked each individual toe. The above-mentioned machine, however, was the rack used in this country.

Holinshed says that, in 1468, Sir Thomas Coke, late Lord Mayor of London, was convicted of misprision of treason, on the single testimony of one Hawkins, elicited by torture; Hawkins himself being executed for treason upon his own confession, made on the rack.

Among the Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy-council is an entry in the 32 Henry VIII., 1540: 'Thomas Thwayt was sent to the Tower of London by certain of the guard with a letter to the Lieutenant, declaring his confession, and commanding him that, in case he would stand still in denial to shew of whom he had heard the thing he confessed, *he should give him a stretch or two at his discretion upon the brake*. In 1546 occurred the only case in which a woman is recorded to have been tortured, the case of Anne Askew; and here one is surprised and ashamed to learn that the Lord Chancellor, 'finding the rack-keeper falter in his operations, threw off his gown, and drew the rack himself so severely that he almost tore her body asunder.'

Alexander Briant, a Jesuit, was, in May 1581, tortured in the Tower; and Anthony Wood says that, besides the ordinary torture, he was 'specially punished for two whole days and nights by famine, by which he was reduced to such extremities that he ate the clay out of the walls of his prison, and drank the droppings of the roof.' Campion, the priest, who was arrested in July 1581, was severely racked in the Tower; and though Lord Burleigh wrote that 'Campion, the Jesuit, was never so racked but that he was presently able to walk and write, and that there was perpetual care had; and the queen's servants, the warders, whose office and act it was to handle the rack, were ever, by those that attended the examinations, specially charged to use it in as *charitable* a manner as such a thing might be'—Campion was so wrung by the torture, that when he was arraigned, his muscles would not act to lift up his hand, which was held up for him by a fellow-prisoner.

One warrant of Elizabeth's to the Lieutenant of the Tower directs him to examine two prisoners, charged with robbery; and says that if they deny their guilt, they are 'to be brought to the rack, and to feel the smart thereof, as the examiners by their discretion shall think good, *for the better boulding out the truth of the matter*.'

In February 1596-7 was issued a warrant for the racking of William Thompson, 'charged to have a purpose to burn her Majesty's ships, or to do some notable villainy.' On such a pretext did torture-warrants issue in the reign of 'good Queen Beas.' Well has it been said, that 'if we may draw our conclusions from the entries in the Council-books, there is no period of our history in which this instrument (torture) was used more frequently and mercilessly than during the latter years of Elizabeth's reign.' 'The rack seldom stood idle in the Tower for all the latter part of Elizabeth's reign,' is the significant observation of Mr Hallam on the subject.

The conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot were severely racked; Guy Fawkes was so under a warrant in James's own handwriting; and Nicholas Owen, Garnet's servant, was questioned while, his thumbs having been tied together, he was



suspended by them from a beam. He was threatened with the rack, as a further means of getting admissions from him, and dread of that torture drove him to commit suicide with his dinner-knife when the jailer had for a moment left him.

The last recorded case of torture was in May 1640, when John Archer, a glover, who was charged with having been one of a party of men that had attacked Laud's palace at Lambeth, was tortured under a royal warrant, which is annexed, as being the last specimen of a curious literature now happily dead:

'To our Trusty and Well-beloved Sir William Balfour, Knight, Lieutenant of our Tower of London.—Trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. Our will and pleasure is, that to-morrow morning, by seven of the clock, you cause John Archer to be carried to the rack; and that there yourself, together with Sir Ralph Whitfield and Sir Robert Heath, knights, our sergeants-at-law, shall examine him upon such questions as our said sergeants shall think fit to propose to him. And if upon sight of the rack he shall not make a clear answer to the said questions, then our further pleasure is that you cause him to be racked as in your and their discretion shall be thought fit. And when he shall have made a full answer, then the same is to be brought to us, and you are still to detain him close prisoner till you shall receive further orders. And this shall be as well to you as to our said sergeants sufficient warrant and discharge in this behalf.—Given under our signet at our court at Whitehall, May 21, 1640.'

Besides the rack, there were other instruments of torture used in the Tower. In May 1604, a committee of the House of Commons reported that they had 'found in Little Ease in the Tower, an engine of torture devised by Mr Skevington, sometime Lieutenant of the Tower (in the reign of Henry VIII.), called Skevington's Daughter, and that the place itself was very loathsome and unclean.' Skevington's Daughter, corrupted into the Scavenger's Daughter, was a broad hoop of iron, consisting of two parts, fastened together by a hinge. The prisoner was made to kneel on the pavement, and to contract himself into as small a compass as he could. Then the executioner, kneeling on his shoulders, and having passed the hoop under his legs, compressed the victim till he was able to fasten the extremities over the small of the back. The time allotted to this torture was an hour and a half, during which time blood often started from the nostrils, and even, it is said, from the hands and feet.

The 'Little Ease' above alluded to was a dungeon so constructed that the prisoner could neither stand, walk, sit, nor lie down. Fellow to it was 'the dungeon among the rats,' a dreadful hole, below high-water mark, into which the ooze of the river found its way, and with that came hosts of rats, which positively gnawed the flesh off living prisoners. Thomas Sherwood, confined here by order of Elizabeth's Council, managed to endure it; but he succumbed to the rack, to which he was taken from his horrible dungeon.

Manacles are first mentioned in a warrant of 25th October 1591. They were kept at the Bridewell, and afterwards at the Tower. They were akin to Skevington's Daughter, of the same genus, differing slightly in the species.

Thumb-screws, favourite instruments in Spain, were not much used in this country, perhaps

because the torture of the 'iron gauntlets' was considered more fully to carry out the principle on which they were constructed. These gauntlets could be contracted by the aid of a screw, and served to compress the wrists, and to suspend the prisoner from two distant points of a beam. The prisoner was placed on three pieces of wood, piled one on the other, which, when his hands had been made fast, were successively withdrawn from under his feet. F. Gerard, who was thus tortured, says: 'I felt the chief pain in my breast, belly, arms, and hands. I thought that all the blood in my body had run into my arms, and began to burst out at my finger-ends. This was a mistake; but the arms swelled, till the gauntlets were buried within the flesh. After being thus suspended an hour, I fainted; and when I came to myself, I found the executioners supporting me in their arms; they replaced the pieces of wood under my feet; but as soon as I was recovered, removed them again. Thus I continued hanging for the space of five hours, during which I fainted eight or nine times.'

Such were the means adopted in England to wring confessions and testimony out of political prisoners. A 'vehement suspicion of guilt' was enough to provoke a torture-warrant, which, as it was a creature of prerogative, and not of law, was of necessity issued directly from the king himself, or by his express command. One of the masters of the Court of Requests was bound to be present when torture was inflicted; and the examination of the prisoner 'before torture, in torture, and after torture,' had to be reported to the king himself, or to his Council.

It was, Coke tells us, a privilege of the peers that their bodies were exempted from the pains of torture.

## LORD ULSWATER.

### CHAPTER XLVII.—NIXON'S HUT.

THE lad who held the letter between his thumb and finger, and whose light-blue eyes, round, prominent, and restless, were engaged in taking a stealthy survey of Lord Ulswater's personal appearance, was not a favourable specimen of the British peasant. He was no chubby, honest-faced youngster, with a wholesome pink skin, and a candid look, such as may be seen any day in agricultural England, and whom it is easy to imagine in the Roman slave-market, with a benevolent pope pinching their ears as he utters the venerable pun: 'Non Angli, sed Angeli;' for these round-faced, ruddy scions of the old English stock really do present no slight resemblance to the rosy cherubs whose heads, and wings, and plump torsos we admire, as they flutter, smilingly, on painted canvas and frescoed ceiling.

The messenger in question differed from these as a gaunt Irish pig, limbed like a greyhound and fanged like a wolf, differs from the indolent porker, small-boned and obese, that wins gold medals at Islington. A lank, rawboned stripling was he as he stood there in his ragged smock-frock; a white felt hat, low-crowned, and with a narrow brim turning upwards, resting on his head. It was just such a hat as the comic countryman wears upon the stage; but it was old and damaged, and had a streak of blood and matted hare's fur upon it, that no keeper could have seen without emotion. From under the upturned brim of this hat, there



fell a quantity of neglected hair, of a white flaxen tint, that matched perfectly with the freckled face, the high cheek-bones, and the protuberant blue eyes of this rustic Ganymede. Lord Ulswater looked to his servant for an explanation.

'Sorry if I've done wrong, my Lord, I'm sure,' said the groom. 'This boy came a quarter of an hour ago with a letter he said he was told not to give into no one's hands except your Lordship's own. He stood me out, it was on business of consequence, and so I made so bold to bring him out to you, my Lord. They're a bad lot, them Nixons, in a general way, and I knowed him for a Nixon directly he put his ugly face inside the stable-yard,' continued the groom, who was a local groom, born and bred in the district, and who knew its inhabitants pretty well by sight and by repute.

'You did right, Masters,' said Lord Ulswater. 'I think the boy must be a Nixon, as you say. Is that your name, my lad?' he added.

'My name be Kit Nixon,' said the youth, sheepish and yet saucy. 'I ben't ashamed of it, and so I tell you, Tom Masters. We're as good as you, we Nixons. We're all there, we are, whatever you may say; and if my dad and Uncle Simon warn't in trouble, you dursn't'—

'Hold your tongue, my young friend,' said Lord Ulswater, rather amused than displeased by the boy's petulance. 'Who wrote that letter?'

'I dunnow,' replied the stripling, suddenly divesting his freckled face of every sign of intelligence, and confronting the inquirer with absolute stolidity; 'I dunnow he.'

'Do you know, you limb, you're a-talking to my Lord, and he be a justice o' the peace, too?' cried the groom, quite scandalised, and then touched his hat again, and 'begged pardon, my Lord.'

'I know,' said the boy, turning savagely on his monitor—'I know, Tom Masters, for all your fine livery, and your boots and spurs, Uncle Simon drashed ye, like a sack o' wheat, he did, at Lushington Fair; and I'll drash ye too, for a sovereign a side, when I'm a year or two older.'

The noble owner of St Pagans laughed gently. This little by-play of comedy was a relief to his gloomy thoughts. He motioned to the groom to be silent, and took the letter from the boy, who resigned it unwillingly.

'You be the gentleman sure?' said Kit Nixon.

Lord Ulswater opened the letter, and almost as soon as his eyes lit upon the writing, a great change came over him, and his face blanched as if the Gorgon's glare were turning his flesh to marble. 'Saddle a horse,' he said hastily: 'the gray, *Firefly*, will do for to-day. Bring the horse round to me here; and make no fuss about this, Masters, either in the stables or in the servants' hall; you understand?' And Lord Ulswater looked fixedly in the man's face.

Masters the groom looked as intelligent as he could. 'Yes, my Lord,' was all he said, but he had an air of great importance as he ran round to the yard. 'Take off gray *Firefly*'s clothing, will ye, you, Simcox,' he cried to a helper. 'Just give him a rub down while I get the saddle and bridle from the harness-room, and turn him round in the stall, and unbuckle them coupling-reins, and get the halter off. Look sharp!'

'My Lord's in a hurry seemingly,' said Simcox as the girls were drawn.

'What's that to you? Don't you go jawing about

it, I advise you, my man,' snapped Masters in reply.

It was not the best way of obeying his Lord's injunction certainly, but he had gray *Firefly* saddled in the twinkling of an eye, and brought him round to the cliff-path, where Lord Ulswater stood, with the letter crumpled in his hand.

'You must shew me the way; I shall not ride fast,' said Lord Ulswater as he mounted.

Kit Nixon, who was the person addressed, nodded and grinned. 'All right, governor,' said this irreverent young person, to whom social decorum was as nothing; and as the rider headed his horse towards the spreading downs, this strange foot-page ambled beside his rein, sending back a gesture of defiance by way of farewell to Masters.

'Darned young gallowasbird; he'll come to no good!' muttered the groom, gazing after him.

*Firefly* was a sixteen-hands high horse and a fast walker; but Kit Nixon, at a shambling, jerky pace, kept well up with him all across the elastic turf, that spread for a mile or so, unbroken, over the downs, running inland. Presently, a gate appeared, guarding the entrance of a narrow lane, and henceforth the way lay between hedgerows, past small woods, and among lonely hills, the sides of which bore a short herbage, nibbled by little flocks of sheep. Only once or twice was a carter, trudging beside his team of two sturdy farm-nags, harnessed tandem-fashion, and drawing a load of quicklime from the kiln, passed upon the solitary road. But rough and uneven as was the track, the guide shewed no sign of distress. 'Trot if ye like!' he said once as he jerked along; and as Lord Ulswater did not press his horse into a faster pace, Kit Nixon merely gave a shrill whistle, to prove that he had breath to spare, and hurled a stone now and again at the rabbits that sat sunning themselves at the entrance of their burrows.

'We live on Clackey Common,' Mr Christopher Nixon had said; and as Clackey, corrupted into Clackey in local parlance, was one of those out-of-the-way nooks which exist in every district, and which few but the compilers of Ordnance Maps have ever heard of, the lad's guidance among the lanes was not a work of supererogation. As Lord Ulswater rode quietly along, with that ill-written letter in his breast-pocket, he found that his thoughts, vagrant as it is in the nature of thoughts to be, strayed to the probable future of the impudent young fellow running beside his stirrup.

As Professor Owen builds up a *Dinornis* out of a few dry bones of the dead-and-gone wingless bird, so had Lord Ulswater the power to construct a tolerably correct mental picture of Kit Nixon from the data before him. He could see the family—there are such everywhere—under a ceaseless stigma, shunned, suspected, getting a livelihood, as *Esau* got one, by the strong hand. All countries contain such civilised savages, plying a dubious industry on the borders of society, snatching and snarling for crumbs like the wild dogs at the gate of Dives. He had some recollection of a Nixon sentenced to penal servitude for horse-stealing, and of another hanged (but that was in John Carnac's nursery-days, and he had heard the servants prattle of the thing) for stealing sheep.

What would become of this creature, whose most innocent employment was to help in netting a covey of partridges, who only worked once a year at hop-picking, and whose father and uncle were in jail for the twentieth time perhaps?

Would he take the shilling from Sergeant Kite, and be moulded into a smart soldier? That was one chance, and emigration was another; but beyond that there lay a vista of nothing but bridewells and model prisons, with perhaps a halter at the end.

Wondering at himself for thinking on these topics, Lord Ulswater did think of them, eyeing the ugly lad in the ragged smock-frock with something that was not far removed from genuine pity. John Carnac had never been a philanthropist, save in the sense that every man of intelligence and education, and who is but moderately selfish, is one. He would have preferred that vice and crime, and want and ignorance, and all the brood of sin and suffering, should become extinct. He knew that the world would be a much more comfortable place of abode if every fellow-creature in it were sober, and good, and honest, taught and washed, lodged and fed, in accordance with the maxims of health and morality. He had rather have seen a happy smiling world of good-will and mutual kindness, than the fierce elbowing and trampling down of the weak and the stupid, which goes on throughout the eddies, and ebbs, and flows of the battle of life. But not if he were to pay for it; not if he were to lose one private advantage or enjoyment incompatible with the general good. Sooner than that, he could look with serene indifference upon the strife and sorrow of the masses blundering blindly on upon their devious path.

But it is easier to hear with equanimity of armies mown down and cities blazing at the convenient distance of some hundred leagues or more, than to bear the sight of a single corpse lying by the roadside, or of one cottage in flames. Kit Nixon, as a member of the dangerous classes, was no more interesting than is any unknown unit of the slain upon a far-off field of combat. It was good to learn from blue-books that there were supposed, on the strength of authentic returns, to be so many thousands and hundreds of them, shewing a diminution or increase of so many per cent. since a previous year, and to hope that the tribe might one day become a thing of the past, improved out of the country. But here was Kit, no impersonal fraction of an arithmetical average, but a live human being, capable of feeling joy and woe, pain and pleasure, and with as much at stake in the great problems of existence as if he had been H. R. H. Prince Christopher, and no mere rustic thief.

Lord Ulswater made more than one effort to draw the youth out, to induce him to talk freely, but all his skill failed. The boy looked cunningly up at him, and then ensconced himself behind that shield of impenetrable stolidity that a modern Corydon, in no matter what part of Europe, can always oppose to questioning. A country lad is not less suspicious of the intentions of other people than is the sharper town-reared boy—perhaps more so; and in Kit's case, the unwillingness to be communicative was stronger than with plain plough-boys who come of unfeigning families. The world was not Kit's friend; and the world's law was to him as the abomination of desolation. Talk confidentially to a fine gentleman, who was one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and who owned land and preserved game—the thing was absurd! A Highland cateran might as well have been expected to boast of his exploits to the sheriff of Selkirkshire, or Brum to exchange numismatic confidences with the Master of the Mint. Young

Nixon proved to resemble Canning's knife-grinder; he had no story to tell, or else he would not tell it.

'This be Clackey Common!' remarked the lad, swinging open a gate that opened from the end of the last lane upon a wide open waste, too wet to be easily reclaimed by any draining-works for which the peaty soil would ever return an equivalent, and which was rushy and reedy, and heathy and broom-tufted, and full of black shallow pools, over which the water-hen flew like a dusky ball of feathers towards her flat nest among the sedges. 'This be Clackey Common! Nice place, ben't it?' added the stripling, grinning with native impudence as he saw the expression of disgust that crossed Lord Ulswater's face on catching sight of this aguish wilderness. As Kit spoke, he winced away from the horse's side, as if expecting a blow in return for his effrontery; but something kindly in Lord Ulswater's grave, handsome face encouraged him to venture back within reach.

'You be a gentleman!' he said critically, and with the air of an authority on such subjects: 'not like Farmer Titterton down to Splashley there, the stuck-up Jackadandy—they calls un Squire Titterton; but I knows better, for all he wears a red coat out with fox-hounds—he licked me with his gig-whip; you may see the cut across my face here yet, just because I halloosed after him, Stowe market-day.—You must mind how you ride here. Keep behind me. It's as wet as can be.'

And, indeed, Lord Ulswater found that his horse's feet sunk into the soft miry earth at every step, unless he kept strictly to the narrow path, full of stones, up which his young guide pushed at a brisk pace.

The path lay uphill after a time, and presently the many-coloured roof of a queer, untidy edifice, low and long, became visible. 'Yon be our house. Nixon's Hut they call it,' said the boy, half proudly, half with shy surliness. 'Father built it, when the tell-tale sneak of a bailiff got him turned out of his cottage up to Tintling Street, five mile away.—I say,' added young Kit, sidling up to pat the neck of the gray horse, 'if you're going to give I something to drink your health, let us have it afore we get there, else Brother Roger 'll grab it.—Whoop! hurra!' cried the young savage a moment later, as he made haste to conceal the two half-crowns which Lord Ulswater tossed to him; and with glistening eyes and elated spirits, he went running actively on in front.

Nixon's Hut soon became more distinctly apparent, with its turfen walls and low-pitched roof, half of turf and half of thatch, overgrown with moss and house-leek, and every parasitic plant that can cling to rotting straw. There were but two windows, very small, and glazed with green bull's-eye glass, but the door stood open. Christopher ran in, and soon ran out again. 'Brother Roger's dead drunk,' he said cheerfully; 'and mother and the children be out, a-gleaning or something. But the cove's in—he what wrote—and here he comes.'

And in very truth, shading his eyes with his hand as if the daylight dazzled him, forth from the hut came, approaching Lord Ulswater in the doubtful fawning way in which a dog in disgrace approaches his master, the sturdy figure of Bendigo Bill.

#### CHAPTER XLVIII.—CONFESSION.

Bendigo Bill came cringing out, with quite a new sort of awkwardness in his gait and air, as he

approached his patron. So might some gross, ignoble demon humbly draw near to do homage at the steps of the burning throne of Milton's archfiend. 'I—I meant to do for the best, my Lord;' he growled these words rather than spoke them; and then the frown that he saw more in Lord Ulswater's eyes than on that broad white brow that it was so hard to ruffle, froze him into silence. Lord Ulswater wheeled gray *Firefly* round: 'Follow!' he said, in the deepest tone of his deep voice; and then, with the ex-bushranger trudging meekly at the heels of his horse, he rode to the highest part of the hilly ground, just outside the boundary of the Nixon domain. Here he drew rein, and waited for Bendigo Bill to come up to his side.

The place was one fairly well suited for a private conversation. There was a broad space from which the broom and heather had been cleared away, and where not a bush remained to shelter eavesdroppers. On three sides stretched the drear expanse of Clackley Moor or Common, and on the fourth lay the two fields and the patch of garden-ground that the squatter had fenced in, unproved, when first he built his wigwam in that wild corner of the earth. Clackley was either no common except by name, or it was a common whereof the commoners had lost their rights by disuse, probably the latter, for the district is one of those south of England tracts of country whereof the population lessens every decade in favour of northern hives of industry. Not so much as a flock of geese or a stray donkey cropped the little grass that straggled here and there among weeds and reeds. The manor was in Chancery, and the receiver of that high court contented himself with drawing rents from solvent tenants. The Nixons were in a fair way to gain a freehold by sheer lapse of time.

But it was not a thriving freehold. The garden was as the garden of the sluggard, choked with rank growth of groundsel and nettles, and there were more poppies, and docks, and wild vetches among the spare oats and the few potatoes, than good husbandry allows. It was bad, wet land, and it was lazily tilled, more as an ostensible means of living than a real one. The only cheerful thing about the enclosure was the gorse hedge, gay with gold bloom, that ran round the lower part of it. A place of bad repute with the county police was Nixon's Hut: not a constable in the shire would have cared to visit it alone.

'How came you here?' asked Lord Ulswater sternly, of Bendigo Bill.

'I knowed the Nixons long ago, so please you, my Lord,' said the man meekly; 'I've been a pal of Long Nixon, that took to the bush, in Australia, and was shot'—

'So you came here for shelter, after the—what shall I call it—the little affair of the other day?' interrupted his patron, with a sneer that distorted his handsome mouth into an expression that was absolutely fiendish.

'Yes, my Lord!' was the downcast answer, and Bendigo Bill's eyes sought the ground.

'You have done wrong,' said Lord Ulswater severely; 'you have gone beyond your instructions, and have brought that bull-neck of yours within the compass of a halter. I ordered you to watch the man, not to mur'—

'Stop, my Lord; don't say it,' hastily implored Bendigo Bill, interrupting his patron for perhaps the first time since their acquaintance had begun.

'I thought to please you by—by'— He passed

the sleeve of his fustian coat once or twice across his dry lips, and took a long breath, and then looked down again, evidently waiting for his employer to speak. But he waited in vain. Not a sound reached his ears but the jingling of gray *Firefly's* bridle as the horse tossed his head, impatient to be gone, and the pawing of gray *Firefly's* ironshod forefoot upon the peaty soil, and the surly hum of a laden bee winging its way home.

Two minutes—three—five! How slowly and painfully they went. The ex-bushranger bore them as he would have borne the rack, with obstinate endurance at first, then with a smothered execration, and at last with an actual groan. He looked up. The rattling of the curb-chain had ceased, and horse and rider, motionless, towered above him like an equestrian statue. There was something irritating, and at the same time awe-inspiring, in that stern repose. The horseman's features, noble and calm, and very pale, paler by far than Bendigo Bill remembered to have seen them, were as inflexible as iron now. The blue eyes were cold and steady as the eyes of a stone saint on a Gothic tomb—not a muscle moved. Lord Ulswater, deep in his dark thoughtfulness, was as still and impassive as if he had been entranced or spell-bound.

'My Lord!' broke out Bendigo Bill, in sheer desperation. He advanced a step, and laid his hand, hesitatingly, on the gray horse's silken mane —'my Lord!'

Lord Ulswater started like one suddenly aroused from sleep, and in a moment he shook off the imperious thoughts that beset him, and was the same cool, courageous gentleman that his ruffianly acolyte had ever known him. 'I repeat it; you have done wrong,' he said, fixing his piercing gaze on Bendigo Bill; 'but spilled blood, like spilled milk, cannot be atoned for by empty words. I don't ask you why you did it; but I do tell you, that you have brought yourself to the very edge of the drop at Debtors' Door of Newgate Jail, and that you have so bungled the business as to implicate me as an accessory after the fact, to use the technical phrase. How dared you send that young ragamuffin to St Pagans? Do you not know that your scrawl of a letter ran every risk of being fingered and peeped at in the servants' hall, before it reached the hands it was meant for? And do you suppose that I should pardon you the disgrace of a public trial, into which I should be dragged by your blundering act?'

Bendigo Bill gave a growl like that of a faithful dog unjustly blamed. 'You know I'd not split; you know I'd swing first!' he said, reproach in his eyes and tone, looking up at the hard, handsome face of his master.

'I know this,' answered Lord Ulswater with an accent of such perfect conviction that it chilled the stout heart of the man who heard it: 'you are certain to give a holiday to the London mob. I hear the hammers, even now, of the workmen putting up the scaffold, and the hoarse roar of the great crowd that blocks the streets around the grim prison-walls in the gray of early morning. I hear the bell of St Sepulchre's toll for the death of a man alive as yet, strong, healthy, likely to last these forty years, if it were not that all the thousands of sightseers below had come expressly to see him strangled to death before their eyes. And I see you, William Huller, led out, with pinioned arms, upon the drop, and you shudder as you feel the hangman's fingers fumbling with the cold cord



around your neck, and you do not look as bold as when my Lord Judge put on the black cap, and you heard your sentence, and boasted you would die game. One look down at the street that seems paved with faces looking up at you, all at you, and then they draw the white cap over your eyes'—

'Be quiet, curse you!' exclaimed Bendigo Bill in irrepressible mental anguish, as the heat-drops beaded fast upon his forehead. 'I can't bear that. Are you a man, I wonder, or the devil himself?' This ruffian was not more imaginative than are most of his class. He lived in the present, and gave little heed to the future. Had he been actually left for execution, he would very probably have eaten a hearty supper, and slept a refreshing sleep on the eve of his doomsday, and then gone out like an ox to the shambles, staring, half-stupid, and half-ferocious, at the preparations for thrusting him out of this world. But Lord Ulswater's words, very slowly and forcibly uttered, very carefully chosen, had sunk into his ears like drops of molten lead, giving pain most exquisite, and tracing a ghastly picture, that was perhaps more dreadful to the ex-bushranger than the reality would have been.

Lord Ulswater watched the working of his untutored friend's scarred and weather-beaten face with a good deal of amusement. He waited quite contentedly till the man's mood should change. Presently, Bendigo Bill began to shuffle awkwardly with his heavy feet, and to cast sidelong glances at his patron. 'I beg your Lordship's pardon,' he said sheepishly.

Lord Ulswater reined his horse round, and rose in his stirrups to look over the hedge and wall of loose stones. No untoward listener was near. 'I can save you from this—I alone,' he said impressively, and Bendigo Bill looked uneasy still, but some hope began to glimmer in his eyes.

'I never killed a white man before—not a white man,' repeated he with great emphasis on the qualification—'except in a stand-up fight. And I wouldn't have hurt him, not beyond choking of him down, and leaving him to come to by degrees, if he hadn't turned and faced me, and known me as I laid hold.' And then it all came out, given with savage force and minuteness of detail, the story of the crime. How Bendigo Bill, eager to gain possession of the documents which he had heard Mr Marsh mention in his first interview with Loy, had gone early to lie in ambush among the piles of timber by the river-side, meaning to put his garrotter's craft in requisition for the purpose of depriving the surgeon of these papers, the importance of which he probably much exaggerated. He had armed himself with a murderous weapon, but he protested, with all the energy of a self-deceiver, that he did not mean to use the steel crowbar, except in defending himself if in peril of capture. But Mr Marsh had not proved an unresisting victim. He had turned on Bendigo Bill, had known him at once, and had called him by his name. 'I hit him then,' Bill confessed—'I hit him with the ripping-chisel, and he closed with me, and we had a goodish tussle; but I got the best of it, and, to stop his hallooing out for help, I—I—but he died hard, sir.' And the ruffian shewed a half-healed scar upon his own cheek, close to the upper lip. 'He got the crow from me one-twentieth part of a minute, and I wrested it back again,' he explained.

The other details of the homicide were few and

brief. He had searched the pockets, had taken the papers that he sought, and had possessed himself of the dead man's watch, in order, if possible, to throw the police on a false scent. But some noise had alarmed him, and he had made haste to throw the body into the river, and had seen it swept away and sucked down by the current. He had then made his escape, had washed away, at the foot of a stone stair leading down to a landing-stage, such stains from the recent deed as were on his hands and clothes, and had tied up his bleeding face in his red handkerchief. Then he had proceeded to the railway terminus, hoping to catch the late mail-train, and to reach Shellton during the dark hours.

But at the terminus, Mr William Huller's evil genius had led him into the presence of a detective officer, who was waiting there, cunningly disguised, to start on professional business by that very train to another town lying on a fork or branch of the Shellton line. This officer, who knew Bendigo Bill perfectly well, had also seen at a glance that the man was agitated and restless, and that there were good grounds for crediting him with some recent mischief. But even detectives are but men, and it was not likely that the sergeant should run the chance of losing a large reward merely that he might escort Bendigo Bill, as a reputed thief, to the nearest police station.

'Mind you, though, Bill, my man,' the officer had said, with lifted forefinger wagging minatory before the ex-convict's eyes, 'if there's any special job gets known of to-night in town, I shall take the liberty of asking a few more questions about how you've spent your time. That's all.'

Bendigo Bill, crestfallen, slunk out of the station. Travel with Sergeant Sharpe, after that warning, and perhaps be locked up on suspicion in some country prison, as a rogue and vagabond well known to the police, until the murder should be town-talk! Run the risk of being stored away in the larder of justice, as it were, like some dainty that would be the better for the keeping! The man would as soon have gone, knowingly, into a lion's den. He had not taken his ticket for Shellton, nor had he let slip the name of the place whither he was bound. There was some comfort in that. He might walk the distance. The enemy would be less likely to pursue him thus, along the old high-road. He lost no time in putting this project into execution. Before the pale dawn broke, he was miles from London, setting his face resolutely seaward, and tramping sturdily on along the dusty common way.

He shewed, at this pinch, some of the instinctive cunning of the lower animals. His point was St Pagans or its neighbourhood, as that of a hunted fox is the well-known earth, far off on some gorse-topped hill, where the fir-spiny stands out blackly against the pearl-gray winter sky. But as the fox doubles and twists, and tries all the resources of his silvan skill to give the hounds the slip, so did Bendigo Bill strive hard to blind the trail. Turning off the main road, he either slept away the hot day in taps of village inns, or plodded along the loneliest lanes, taking short-cuts over field and common, and only returned to the highway when night was come to screen and befriend him. Always, however, he was steadfast to his purpose. Lord Ulswater was his patron and employer; Lord Ulswater could, and doubtless would, get him off scot-free. His great aim was to reach St Pagans

before he should be arrested and cut off from communicating with his master.

The body must have been found long since, he told himself, as he made his devious way towards the coast. Before he reached the end of his journey, he knew that his conjecture had been proved a true one. It was in a noisy public-house in a market-town, on the day of a horse-fair, that he read the account of how and where the corpse had been discovered. He read the paragraph in the column of accidents and offences of the county paper, yet wet from the press, on that the day of its publication. The country editor had extracted that paragraph from the London journals at the last moment, and when the *Flying Horse* received its copy of the local Gazette, the barman gave the first offer of its perusal to the stout-built navvy, tramping from London in search of work, because he was sober in the midst of a crowd of drunken, bawling horse-chanters; and thus Bendigo Bill came to read the printed announcement of his own crime.

He was poring over it still, with a dull, fearful curiosity, when he felt a touch upon his arm, and looking up, recognised a face that he had not seen for many a day—the face of Kit Nixon's big brother, a strapping young man in velveteen, with a cart-whip in his hand.

'Why, Bill Huller?' said the big brother of Kit Nixon. 'What's up now?'

Bendigo Bill knew this Nixon right well, and all the Nixons, save young Kit and the juveniles of the family. He had robbed orchards and hen-roosts in company with Simon, this lad's uncle, now in jail; and had been a comrade of another of the tribe, Long Nixon the bushranger, shot, after the manner of bushrangers, by a trooper of the Australian mounted police. The Nixon in velveteen was of a younger generation; but he, too, had co-operated with Bendigo Bill in the matter of hockussing a hop-grower fresh from the Borough Market, with his canvas-bag of sovereigns in his pocket. The two associates in this bygone enterprise met in friendly fashion.

Then it was that Bendigo Bill first bethought him of Nixon's Hut, and how he might lie snugly there concealed, instead of venturing into Shellton. The lawless family dwelling on Clackley Common would not, he knew, betray him. Enmity to all constables, sessions, assizes, and legal persons and paraphernalia was a tradition with them, and almost a passion. Very likely, as Sir Robert Walpole declared every man, politically speaking, to have his price, the Nixons might have theirs; but it would need a large reward to induce a member of the household to give up an old pal, and stand in the box as a crown witness.

The scheme was soon broached; but Bendigo Bill was careful to drop no hint of anything worse than robbery with violence as the cause of his desire to 'keep dark' for a while. The Nixons were not very scrupulous, but they might have felt some repugnance to wilful assassination. Policemen and gamekeepers were, no doubt, natural enemies of the human race, to exterminate whom was excusable, if not meritorious; but the cold-blooded killing of a person not belonging to these objectionable classes, would have probably shocked them not a little. As a garrotter in difficulties, yet with sufficient cash to stand treat liberally, the fugitive was more than welcome. He had been for two or three days a guest at Nixon's Hut, and his spirits were beginning to flag by day, and

his sleep by night to be troubled with grisly dreams.

'Do help me to get out o' this, my Lord,' the fellow pleaded, as he concluded his tale; and as he spoke, he produced the papers taken from the person of the unfortunate Shellton doctor; 'do give me a lift, or I shall get the horrors. I've seen chaps so, that had something on their minds, at the diggings.'

Lord Ulswater took the papers: he looked them over, almost carelessly, and placed them in his pocket. 'Worth having, but not at such a price!' he said with his cold smile. Then he smiled again, more cordially, and his voice was more gentle than before, as he said: 'I will give you a lift, as you call it, Bill—a lift that will set you on your feet again, free from all apprehensions of a near acquaintance with Mr Calcraft. Your talents have not scope, it seems, in this old-fashioned country: California, now, with three or four hundred pounds to start you in life'—

'The very thing, my Lord!' cried the man, brightening up at once. 'If your Lordship only would.'

'And I will. But you have a service to render me first,' said Lord Ulswater. 'Do not trouble yourself to speak. I see by your face that you would do much to begin life afresh in an untried country. I cannot tell you yet what is the service that I require. Keep still, and keep sober. In a day, or two, or three, you shall see me here again; and I promise you that within a week or two, you shall be at sea, clear of England.—Enough! you must have patience!' And shaking off the ruffian's grasp from his bridle, Lord Ulswater turned his horse, and rode leisurely back to St Pagans.

## THE BLIND.

FROM the love of paradox, rather than from any lack of pity, it is the fashion to underrate the evils of being blind. It is said, 'other senses are given to those thus afflicted,' or at least that the remaining organs are sharpened and stimulated to supply the deficiency of sight. Even the cheerfulness of the poor sufferers from this calamity is cited as evidence of their not having so much to complain of after all. Now, this specious talk is worth nothing. The blind man is, with the sole exception (and even that a doubtful one) of the deaf-mute, the most to be pitied of all God's creatures. 'Blindness,' says Guillié (who surely ought to know), 'not only deprives a man of the sensations which belong to sight, but often distorts all his thoughts.' Mr Johns, the chaplain of the Blind School, St George's Fields (the largest asylum of the kind in Great Britain), has recently published a most interesting volume,\* which, only too fully corroborating this view, should put an end at once and for ever to those 'plausible fancies by which people relieve their minds from the uneasy contemplation of a hopeless calamity.' Much experience has shewn him that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the loss of sight shatters for long the whole framework of body and mind; and that the remaining senses and powers, instead of springing into new life, are weakened and depressed. 'A man does not become blind by merely shutting his eyes.' His loss of vision affects every part of him.

\* *Blind People, their Works and Ways.* London: Murray.

On the other hand, if a man be born blind his lot is far worse. 'If his friends are well off, and educated people, all the appliances that education demands and money can procure are at once brought to bear upon him. The hand of love leads him to the tree of knowledge, proves that it is within even his reach; shews to him a spark of light in the darkness, how the spark may be fanned into a flame, and the flame made to shine cheerily on the uphill path. But if his friends be poor, or uneducated, the whole treatment is reversed. Too often he is pushed aside into a corner as an encumbrance, or, at all events, one for whom little or nothing can be done; treated perhaps not unkindly, but gradually spoiled, in the worst sense of the word, by a mixture of careless neglect and more worthless indulgence. In this case, the boy sinks into a condition little better than that of an animal; vicious or mischievous, amiable, lazy, or apathetic, as the case may be; but probably into darkness moral as well as mental, greater or less according to the light about him. Bodily pleasures are his main thought; he becomes selfish; selfishness at times makes him talkative, but as often moody; he grows silent, reserved, nervous, timid, opinionated, and discontented. These are too often (whatever optimists may imagine to the contrary) the characteristics of poor blind children.'

Among other popular delusions upon this subject must be classed the notion that the blind can distinguish colours by the touch. The celebrated saying of one thus afflicted (quoted by Locke), that scarlet was 'like the sound of a trumpet,' was nothing, says our chaplain, 'but a happy shot.' Trumpets and scarlet go well together, and were perhaps more frequently heard of eighty years ago than now, so that the name of one may have easily suggested the other; but, at all events, there is no truth in the remark. The blind boy, under proper teaching, brings his senses of touch and hearing indeed into a state of exceeding acuteness, but they cannot do for him, after all, what a ray of vision would effect at a single glance. 'It's a long time,' once observed a blind old woman to our author, 'before you learns to be blind.'

Persons who are born without sight cannot in the least picture to themselves what it is to be able to see. When the boy upon whom Cheselden operated for cataract obtained his vision, he had no idea of distance. He believed the objects which he looked on touched his eyes, as those which he felt touched his skin. How the likeness of his father's face could be got into his mother's watch-case seemed to him as impossible as getting a bushel into a pint-measure. It took him some time to distinguish between the dog and the cat, and he had to feel them over carefully with his own hand, in order to do so.

When some one asked Du Puiseaux whether he would not be glad to have his sight, he replied: 'If it were not for curiosity, I would rather have long arms: it seems to me that my hands would teach me better what is passing in the moon than your eyes or telescopes; and, besides, the eyes cease to see sooner than the hands to touch. It would therefore be as well to improve the organ I have as to give me the one I want.' The born blind can have no notion of space, or distance, or of extended size. 'A blind man,' says Winslow, 'walking through a lofty cathedral, is really unconscious of aught about him save the coldness of the air and the stone pavement.' No vision,

whether of beauty or of horror, can intrude upon the dreams of the born-blind. 'I dream,' said a blind boy, 'about people. I dream of my brother (also blind). I know he is with me; I hear his voice. I am in the places where we used to go before he died. . . . Sometimes I dream I am walking in the fields; I tread on the grass; I smell the fresh air.'

Hear another blind dreamer. 'I dream that I am in the great basket-shop. I know I am there by the size of the room—the length of it. The sound tells me that. I am in my old place, where I work. I touch my box, and if the dream goes on, I get my tools out.' Another dreams that 'some one tried to frighten me, and made-believe he was a ghost by *pushing me down sideways*.' A very tangible sort of spiritual phenomenon. Surely it is evident from all this how complete is the isolation of the Blind from the Seeing; how inadequate are the senses that remain to the former to supply the want of that they lack.

There is another specious fallacy exposed, another flattering unctio done away with by our plain-spoken chaplain—namely, that blind people are almost always good musicians. That they are all fond of music is true enough, and, as a rule, they all imagine they have the gift. Like the man who, when asked if he could play the violin, replied he had never tried, they fancy they have only to make the attempt to become good players at once. Yet, though nine out of ten of our blind street-beggars use some instrument of music, how rarely do they do so with success. They fail, and yet are unconscious of their failure. In catching hold of the mere sound, they falsely flatter themselves they have caught the melody. It is true that an exception now and then occurs, as in the recent case of Blind Tom. 'He was the son of a negro slave, born in South Georgia in the year 1850; and brought up among other slave children. He was, too, a thorough "nigger," jet black, with thick blubber lips, protruding heels, and woolly hair. Up to seven years old, he was counted and treated as an idiot; when, suddenly, one night he was overheard playing the piano in his master's drawing-room; touching it with singular grace and beauty, wandering through rapid cadences and wild bursts of melody, as a finished musician. As far as could be known, he had never even touched a piano till that night. But from that time forth, he was a prodigy among the planters' wives and daughters, and had free access to the piano, on which he every day did greater wonders; repeating without effort almost note by note any music once played to him, and with wonderful accuracy, mimicking any fault or peculiarity in the style of the performer. But fondest of all was he of wandering away into some sad minor key, full of passion, sorrow, or pain, that seemed striving for utterance, and yet was full of mystery to those who listened. His marvellous powers were soon exhibited to the American public; and then created as much astonishment as they have since done in London. After once hearing them, he would sit down and play, with amazing correctness, difficult pieces of music, a dozen pages in length; and placed at the piano with another performer, he (like Mozart at nine years old) played a perfect bass accompaniment even to the treble of music heard for the first time. After any prolonged musical effort, says his American biographer, his whole bodily frame seems to give way, and



exhaustion follows, accompanied by epileptic spasms. He sits full half a yard from the piano, with outstretched arms, clutching at the keys at first "like an ape clutching food," and now and then bursting out into an idiotic laugh. Then the head falls back, the hands begin to work, and wild strains of harmony float over the room, such as have rarely fallen on the ear before, or, in rapid succession, passages from Weber, Beethoven, and Mozart, all full of such intense passion, that the whole audience are snatched into a wild uproar of applause, which the poor idiotic musician is himself the first to begin, and to end with a loud ringing laugh of "Yha, Yha!" in true negro fashion. Then, when all is over, a weary look of despair settles down on the distorted face, a tired sigh steals from the restless lips—and the last spark of music seems to have faded out into hopeless, dead vacancy.

But Blind Tom's case is not only an exceptional one; it is marked by some curious contradictory features. Although he could evoke such harmonies from the piano, one of his favourite feats was, on the other hand, to produce the most hideous discords, such as were terrible for folks with ears to listen to. He would play an air in one key with the right hand, and an accompaniment in another key, while he sang the air in a third.

If we descend to street-music, divided as Mr Mayhew has it 'into the tolerable and intolerable,' we usually find the blind among the latter class. Old Blind Sarah, a notorious metropolitan character who used to play what she called the Cymbals—but which was in reality the hurdy-gurdy—took five months to learn that simple instrument, and three weeks to acquire any new tune. 'King David,' she was wont to remark, 'used to play on one of these here instruments, which it isn't hard to play; the only thing is to *kip the works covered up, or the halfpence is apt to drop in.*'

Thus far we have thought it right, in justice to the blind, to set forth the disadvantages and imperfections under which they really labour; but our author speaks words of comfort also, and is careful to mention such compensatory matters as are to be found upon the side of this sorely afflicted class. The memory of the blind is prodigious, and although it may be partly attributable to 'the habits of preciseness and order which they attain, through education,' it is certain that their isolation, and the absence of all external distractions, assist this faculty. A large number of the pupils in St George's Fields acquire, during their six years' stay there, the whole Psalter, and there is a young man there, at the present time, who can repeat the whole of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, with marginal notes and a biography! He used to learn a hundred lines in about that number of minutes; and there were other examples, among his fellows, of almost equal facility.

It is this wondrous power of memory which enables the blind to recognise localities so quickly. The St George's Fields institution is an extensive rambling building, and yet with half of it—that is, the wing devoted to males—a boy from the country becomes thoroughly acquainted in a month. At first, he is of course entirely dependent upon some pupil or teacher's hand to reach the school-room or the chapel, the dining-hall or the basket-shop; but he soon learns to find his way, not only so far, but to the very spot in the basket-shop—one hundred and fifty yards long—where he sits to split

the withies. He knows his own box, too, from those of Smith and Brown on either side of him. 'In a year, he will know his own tools by some mark or flaw not patent to the eye: in a couple of years, he will know the handle of the door to music-room No. 5 from that of No. 6: he will run quickly with a half-finished basket in his hand from the workshop, across a wide yard, exactly to the very doorstep of the open shed in which there is a tank for soaking his willow-work.' This is because his senses of touch and hearing have been scientifically *educated*, and not that they are keener because he is blind. Keeness of hearing once saved Blacklock's life. He was walking down a garden-path that led to a deep open well, when the patter of the feet of his favourite dog upon the boarding warned him of his danger. But it is the sense of Touch which is the primary sense of all to the blind boy. 'By it he reads his chapter in St John or in *Robinson Crusoe*; he plays chess or dominoes; works a sum in Long Division, or writes a letter home to his mother, which she can read with her eyes, and he with his fingers. By the help of touch, he weaves a rug of coloured wools embracing every variety of scroll-work, or of those peculiar flowers and fruits which grow only on carpet-land; or fringes with delicate green and red a door-mat for a lady's boudoir: by touch he *sees* any curiosity, such as a lamp from the Pyramids, or a scrap of mineral, which you describe to him, and which, having once handled, he always speaks of as having been seen. He *thinks* he can read a good deal of your character by touch when you shake hands with him; and when he has heard you talk for a few minutes, he will make a good guess as to your age, temper, ability, and stature. Saunderson, at times, guessed even more than this. He had been sitting one day and pleasantly chatting with some visitors for an hour, when one of them wished the company good-morning, and left the room. "What white teeth that lady has!" said the sarcastic professor. "How can you possibly tell that?" said a friend. "Because," was the ready answer, "for the last half-hour she has done nothing but laugh." This was shrewd enough, but specially characteristic of him as a blind man.'

Doubtless, next to the sense of touch, with the blind, comes (though far behind it) the sense of hearing. The blind boy knows his friend's step in a trice, and his enemy's, even among many others. 'In the great basket-shop at St George's there is generally a teacher, with sight, at either end of the room; but one is just now gone to fetch some osiers from another part of the building. Our friend little Trotter is at work half-way down the room, but has met with some trifling difficulty not to be solved without his teacher's help. The fifty boys and men are almost all talking as they work, or perhaps humming a tune, or beating their work with a bar of iron; and some are crossing the room in search of tools, help, or advice; so that, altogether, the scene is full of noisy life, and as unlike a shop full of blind people as may well be imagined. But, in the midst of all the noise, Trotter sits quietly waiting; he knows that the master went out of the room five minutes ago (*he will tell you that he saw him go*), and, though several persons have since come in at that door, he knows that his teacher is not one of the few. All at once he starts up, as the door shuts with a bang, and the pupil walks quickly up the

room,\* in a direct line, as if he saw the table at which his teacher now sits. As he goes back to his place, another person enters by the same door, and makes his way hastily towards the other end; but he has not gone a dozen steps before more than one voice among the basket-makers is heard to whisper: "Here comes the chaplain," or "There goes Brown."

'Or, glance into the same room an hour later, and the whole scene is changed. The bell has rung for leaving off work; but, as it is a wet wintry day, some fifty or sixty of the pupils are here under shelter, walking two-and-two, arm-in-arm, round the room, whistling, chatting, singing, or shouting most uproariously, but all promenading as methodically and evenly as if every one there had sight. Not a single boy ever strays out of his rank, no one runs against his neighbour; though, at the first glance, it appears only like a noisy and confused crowd. There are three doors to the shop, one at either end, and one in the centre; every two minutes some boy darts out from the crowd, or rushes in to join it, by that middle door; but in neither case does he jostle friend or foe. Here comes Trotter himself. He is in search of his friend Jones, who, driven in by the rain, left him ten minutes ago at the swing, and is now the solitary unit in the long chain of couples. As tramp by tramp it works its slow way past the door where he stands, Trotter, "with his face all eye," watches to pounce on his friend as he goes by. In spite of all the din, he hears him when some yards off, seizes on his arm, as if he saw it passing, and away they go, to join steadily in that jolly unbroken march till the glad sound of

That tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell,

send them flying out into the colonnade to muster for cold beef, bread, and beer.'

All this is wonderful indeed; but it cannot be too often reiterated that it is the result of Teaching. Blind Sanderson (already referred to), who, at thirty years of age, was Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, never knew—what every blind boy at St George's Fields knows—how to write. That eminent mathematician—of whom, however, there is no permanent record in the world of Science beyond an indifferent Algebra—our author describes as the one blind man who has ever shewed himself to be a Genius. We are, of course, speaking of persons *born* blind—which it is hardly possible to suppose that Homer was. Those who become blind, particularly in riper years, and after they have received their education, are in a totally different category. Of no eminent living blind men—such as Fawcett, Gale, and Prescott—can it be said that they have won their laurels under 'the cloud of ever-during dark.' At the same time, it seems to us that our author does not lay sufficient stress upon the terrible sense of loss which must seize upon such men after their calamity, and which does not affect the born blind. How great must be the vigour of character that enables them to battle at all with the blank horror that surrounds them, far less to enable them to master matters which are difficult to men with sight! 'To

\* 'If any one with sight imagines this to be an easy matter, let him shut his eyes when forty yards from, and opposite to, his own door, and make the rest of his journey in the dark. The chances are a thousand to one against his arriving anywhere near the well-known threshold.'

both classes of persons thus afflicted, however, occupation is all in all. 'Never,' says a blind man, 'is patience more tried than when a blind child is sitting with his hands before him' doing nothing. Our author closes his interesting little book with a few earnest words addressed to the parents of such unfortunates. 'Begin' [with your children] 'as early as possible the great lesson of life. Whatever their loss, privation, or suffering, they have a definite place in life to take. At once find for them some work of body, mind, and spirit.'

What is much required is a well-organised school or college for the education of blind children from the upper ranks of life. The poor, in this matter, for once seem to be better supplied than the rich; but, on the other hand, they have the greater need. No one, after reading this interesting little volume, can hesitate to assist the funds of the Blind School under the mistaken notion that blindness is not so terrible a misfortune after all.

#### 'T THE BUD.'

Ax lovely simmer gloamin',  
Doun by the Craigie Wood,  
I pu'd twa bonnie rosebuds,  
A white ane and a red.

The white was for a lassie,  
The red was for mysel;  
I took them hame, an' tended them  
Wi' water frae the well.

Baith late an' air I watched them  
Wi' fond an' anxious e'e,  
For I thoct in them an emblem  
O' the future I micht see.

I waited for them openin'  
In fragrant beauty wide,  
An' breathin' out their sweetness,  
As they nestled side by side.

An' I wove the glowin' fancy  
That a' young lovers ken,  
O' a lang an' lovin' lifetime  
Aye brighter till the en'.

'Twas foolish, ay, an' sinfu',  
But true it proved for a';  
The red bud blossomed lanely,  
The white ane dwined awa'.

O heart! be strong to bear it;  
O een! frae tears keep free;  
O life! be pure and noble—  
An angel watcheth thee.

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Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.